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Letter dated 22 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a self-explanatory letter addressed to you by Charles Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic of Liberia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Neh **Dukuly-Tolbert**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am pleased to present my compliments and to acknowledge receipt of resolution 1343 (2001) adopted by the Security Council at its 4287th meeting on 7 March 2001. The resolution has been carefully reviewed and my Government has taken note of the demands of the Security Council, and accordingly will do all that is possible to ensure that the concerns of the Security Council are adequately addressed. In addressing these concerns, however, the Liberian Government wishes to reiterate its rejection of the charges levelled against it and the President by the report of the Panel of Experts (S/2000/1195). It remains the view of the Government of Liberia that the report does not provide unequivocal and overwhelming evidence as is being claimed.

I wish to bring to your attention and that of the Security Council my Government's dismay at the failure of the Security Council to engage the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in a partnership effort to address the concerns of the Council in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. As you are aware, ECOWAS has undertaken peacekeeping initiatives in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau with the support of the Council. It has further institutionalized this role through a protocol establishing its mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security. Despite the ECOWAS request to the Security Council to work with the Liberian Government on the matters raised by the Council, resolution 1343 (2001) relegates ECOWAS merely to a source of information and not as a regional grouping capable of conflict management under a multilateral framework.

Liberia's engagement in the Sierra Leonean peace process has been within the framework of an ECOWAS peace plan in partnership with the United Nations. The relegation of ECOWAS to a mere source of information and the subsequent call upon the President of Liberia to help ensure that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) meets certain objectives are incongruent in that Liberia, a founding member of ECOWAS, may find it difficult to participate in the peace process in Sierra Leone in the absence of a clearly defined and acceptable role for ECOWAS. Hence, despite the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1343 (2001), it remains imperative that a credible partnership between ECOWAS and the United Nations be established.

All will agree with me that it is essential for Liberia's compliance with the demands of the Security Council to be credibly verified. In this regard, Liberia calls upon the United Nations to put into place a credible verification mechanism that will provide information on the basis of empirical evidence rather than a priori reasoning leading to wrong conclusions. An essential element of a credible verification mechanism is the need to establish a presence in Liberia. The presence of a unit of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in Liberia would be welcomed by the Government of Liberia, especially at Roberts International Airport and other ports of entry. Furthermore, the deployment of a unit of UNAMSIL on the Liberian side of the border would also be welcomed. However, Liberia is quite aware that the current condition of UNAMSIL, especially its lack of adequate manpower and logistics, prohibits the effective discharge of its mandate in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, the Security Council saw fit to expand the mandate of UNAMSIL to cover Liberia in providing information on Liberia's compliance with

the Security Council resolution. Liberia would consider it only fair that the UNAMSIL mandate should also provide for its presence in Liberia to facilitate credible reporting.

It is the concern of the Liberian Government that the linkage of the objectives of the United Nations in the peace process in Sierra Leone to the intentions of resolution 1343 (2001) on Liberia sets the stage for Liberia to assume responsibility for the effectiveness of the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone. Considering the currently inadequate capacity of UNAMSIL, it would seem highly probable that Liberia could be used as a scapegoat, and blamed for any failures on the part of UNAMSIL. It is therefore essential that the international community appreciate its disengagement policy and not expect that Liberia will act in any contrary manner.

The Government of Liberia is pleased to inform the Security Council, through the Secretary-General, that consistent with the demands of the Council, it has taken the following measures:

(a) All members of the RUF have been expelled from the territory of Liberia, the RUF contact office has been closed down and all RUF activities banned in Liberia;

(b) The border between Liberia and Sierra Leone has been closed and the United Nations is requested to deploy observers at Roberts International Airport and other ports of entry, and ECOWAS has been also invited to deploy monitors in Liberia;

(c) A ban has been placed on the entry into Liberia of all uncertificated rough diamonds from countries with certification regimes; a ban has also been placed on the export of all rough diamonds from Liberia for a period of 120 days, and pending the establishment of an internationally acceptable and transparent certification regime in Liberia;

(d) A court order has been obtained to allow local commercial banks to disclose information to the Government on all financial assets that may be held by the RUF or any of its members named in annex 3 of the report of the Panel of Experts. Upon the establishment of the existence of any financial assets, the Government, through the Central Bank of Liberia, will freeze all such assets and notify the United Nations. Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade has been requested to search for the existence of any businesses registered in Liberia under the name of the RUF or any of its members named in annex 3 of the report of the Panel of Experts. Any registered business found under this search will have its assets frozen and its operations closed down. The Government will expand this exercise to cover additional members of RUF to be identified by the Committee to be established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001);

(e) All Liberian-registered aircraft were ordered grounded, and subsequently the registrations of all Liberian aircraft were revoked as of 6 March 2001. On the basis of the revocation exercise, Liberia has no aircraft in its registry. Notification of the revocation order has been circulated to the affected aircraft operators, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the civil aviation authorities of the member States of ICAO. The Minister of Transport of Liberia has travelled to ICAO headquarters for discussion with its secretariat on possible assistance in the updating of the Liberian aircraft registry consistent with annex VII to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944.

In carrying out these measures, the Liberian Government herewith makes the following requests of the United Nations:

(a) That the United Nations establish a verification mechanism to report on Liberia's compliance with the demands of the Council;

(b) That the United Nations deploy observers at Roberts International Airport and other ports of entry;

(c) That the United Nations provide technical assistance to the Government of Liberia for the establishment of an internationally acceptable diamond certification regime;

(d) That the United Nations deploy UNAMSIL on the Liberian side of the Liberian-Sierra Leone border;

(e) That the United Nations engage ECOWAS in a partnership in conflict management in West Africa, and in particular, Sierra Leone.

While Liberia assumes its responsibility and duties as a member of the United Nations, the rights of Liberia must be recognized and protected under the Charter of the United Nations. Of fundamental concern is the ongoing threat posed to Liberia's national security by former combatants of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) now turned dissidents who are operating freely within neighbouring Guinea and waging war against Liberia from Guinea. The presence of ULIMO forces in Guinea and the Guinean Government's support for these dissident forces is an open secret in Guinea, which has been confirmed by diplomatic sources, relief workers and Guinean citizens. Liberia has a right to defend its territorial integrity against armed aggression.

ULIMO is a destabilizing force in the Mano River Union and must be recognized as a threat to the Governments of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone by the Security Council. One group of ULIMO is being recruited, trained and armed in Sierra Leone as members of the Sierra Leonean Army, while another group is being facilitated by the Guinean authorities to achieve their objective of ousting the Liberian Government by force of arms.

At the time of the adoption of resolution 1343 (2001), the territorial integrity of Liberia for the fifth time was under attack from Guinea. Although in two of those attacks, some European diplomats and international aid workers were abducted and subsequently released on Guinean territory, some members of the international community malignantly indict the Government of Liberia as an aggressor nation, obscuring the security concerns of the Government and people of Liberia. It will be recalled that the Liberian Government undertook the destruction of all arms and ammunition collected during the disarmament exercise in Liberia. This action was based upon the request of the international community and the desire of the Liberian people to live in peace with their neighbours, and a determination to commit themselves to the Herculean task of consolidating peace at home, reconstructing shattered lives and the pursuit of reconciliation. Immediately thereafter, the first of those attacks occurred. The net effect of these onslaughts on the peaceful people of Liberia is the complete desolation of Lofa County, the tragic loss of lives and the wanton destruction of property. The massive displacement of Liberians along with its attendant malaise presents a major crisis to the Government of Liberia. However, the international community has failed to condemn or acknowledge this grave threat

to international peace and security, as though Liberians do not also have a right to security.

In exercising its responsibilities under the Charter, the Security Council must not seek to be unreasonable by calling on Liberia, a Member State committed to cooperating with the United Nations, to undermine its capacity to exercise its right under the Charter to defend its territorial integrity and national independence. Liberia acknowledges its duties to the international community and equally its rights as a member of the community of nations.

I wish to request that you kindly circulate this letter to the members of the Security Council as a document of that body.

(*Signed*) Dankpannah Dr. Charles Ghankay **Taylor**